<u>C L A I M S</u>

1. A method of quantitative determination of an image drift in a digital imaging microscope, comprising the steps of using a pattern which has a plurality of features spaced from one another into mutually perpendicular directions; producing a set of images of the pattern with certain time intervals therebetween; and determining an offset of each of the features in the set of the thusly obtained images as an image drift.

2. A method as defined in claim 1; and further comprising using the pattern which includes four said features, which two of the features spaced in one direction and two of the features spaced in a perpendicular direction.

3. A method as defined in claim 1; and further comprising determining a center of each feature, said determining an offset includes determining an offset of said center of each of said features in said set of images of said pattern.

4. A method as defined in claim 1, wherein said determining an offset includes determining a center of each of said features and then determining a central point between said centers of said features, said determining of an offset includes determining an offset of said central points in said set of images.

5. A method as defined in claim 3, wherein said determining an offset the centers of the features is performed in two mutually perpendicular directions.

6. A method as defined in claim 2, wherein said determining of an offset of said centers of said features is performed so as to determine turning of said centers of said features.

7. A method as defined in claim 1; and further comprising providing a plurality of patterns which are different from one another by at least one parameter selected from the group consisting of a size of each feature and a magnitude of a space between the features, and selecting a pattern in correspondence with a size range of measurements to be performed by a scanning electron microscope.

8. A method as defined in claim 1; and further comprising providing a plurality of patterns which are different from one another by at least one parameter selected from the group consisting of a size of each feature and a magnitude of a space between the features, and selecting a pattern in correspondence of a drift acceptable by a user of the scanning electron microscope.

9. A method as defined in claim 1; and further comprising a step of representing the thusly determined image drift graphically on a display screen.

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10. A method as defined in claim 1; and further comprising representing the thusly determined image drift in a digital form.

11. A method as defined in claim 1; and further comprisign comparing the thusly determined drift with a predetermined image drift threshold; and providing an answer whether the scanning electron microscope with the thusly determined drift can be utilized or not for metrology purposes.